

“MY TIMES ARE IN YOUR HAND” NO. 2205

**A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD’S-DAY MORNING, MAY 17, 1891,
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.**

*“My times are in Your hand.”
Psalm 31:15.*

DAVID was sad; his life was spent with grief, and his years with sighing. His sorrow had wasted his strength and even his bones were consumed within him. Cruel enemies pursued him with malicious craft, even seeking his life. At such a time he used the best resource of grief, for he says in verse fourteen, “But I trusted in You, O Lord.” He had no other refuge but that which he found in faith in the Lord his God. If enemies slandered him, he did not render railing for railing; if they devised to take away his life, he did not meet violence with violence, but he calmly trusted in the Lord. They ran here and there, using all kinds of nets and traps to make the man of God their victim, but he met all their inventions with the one simple defense of trust in God. Many are the fiery darts of the wicked one, but our shield is one. The shield of faith not only quenches fiery darts, but it breaks arrows of steel. Though the javelins of the foe were dipped in the venom of hell, yet our one shield of faith would hold us harmless, casting them off from us. Thus David had the grand resource of faith in the hour of danger. Note well that he uttered a glorious claim, the greatest claim that man has ever made, “I said, You are my God.” He that can say, “This kingdom is mine,” makes a royal claim; He that can say, “This mountain of silver is mine,” makes a wealthy claim, but he that can say to the Lord, “You are my God,” has said more than all monarchs and millionaires can reach. If this God is your God by His gift of Himself to you, what more can you have? If Jehovah has been made your own by an act of appropriating faith, what more can be conceived of? You have not the world, but you have the Maker of the world, and that is far more. There is no measuring the greatness of his treasure who has God to be his all in all.

Having thus taken to the best resource by trusting in Jehovah, and having made the grandest claim possible by saying, “You are my God,” the Psalmist now stays himself upon a grand old doctrine, one of the most wonderful that was ever revealed to men. He sings, “My times are in Your hand.” This to him was a most cheering fact; he had no fear as to his circumstances, since all things were in the divine hand. He was not shut up unto the hand of the enemy, but his feet stood in a large room, for he was in a space large enough for the ocean, seeing the Lord had placed him in the hollow of His hand. To be entirely at the disposal of God is life and liberty for us.

The great truth is this—all that concerns the believer is in the hands of the Almighty God. “My times,” these change and shift, but they change only in accordance with unchanging love, and they shift only according to the purpose of One with whom is no variableness nor shadow of a turning. “My times,” that is to say, my ups and my downs, my health and my sickness, my poverty and my wealth—all those are in the hand of the Lord, who arranges and appoints according to His holy will the length of my days, and the darkness of my nights. Storms and calms vary the seasons at the divine appointment. Whether times are reviving or depressing remains with Him who is Lord both of time and of eternity, and we are glad it is so.

We assent to the statement, “My times are in Your hand,” as to their result. Whatever is to come out of our life is in our heavenly Father’s hands. He guards the vine of life, and He also protects the clusters which shall be produced thereby. If life is as a field, the field is under the hand of the great Husbandman, and the harvest of that field is with Him also. The ultimate results of His work of grace upon us, and of His education of us in this life, are in the highest hand. We are not in our own hands, nor in the hands of earthly teachers, but we are under the skillful operation of hands which make nothing in vain.

The close of life is not decided by the sharp knife of the fates, but by the hand of love. We shall not die before our time; neither shall we be forgotten and left upon the stage too long.

Not only are we ourselves in the hand of the Lord, but all that surrounds us. Our times make up a kind of atmosphere of existence, and all this is under divine arrangement. We dwell within the palm of God's hand. We are absolutely at His disposal, and all our circumstances are arranged by Him in all their details. We are comforted to have it so.

How came the Psalmist's times to be thus in God's hand? I should answer, first, that they were there in the order of nature, according to the eternal purpose and decree of God. All things are ordained of God, and are settled by Him, according to His wise and holy predestination. Whatever happens here happens not by chance, but according to the counsel of the Most High. The acts and deeds of men below, though left wholly to their own wills, are the counterpart of that which is written in the purpose of heaven. The open acts of Providence below tally exactly with that which is written in the secret book, which no eye of man or angel as yet has scanned. This eternal purpose superintended our birth. "In your book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." In your book, every footprint of every creature is recorded before the creature is made. God has mapped out the pathway of every man who traverses the plains of life. Some may doubt this, but all agree that God foresees all things, and how can they be certainly foreseen unless they are certain *to be*? It is no mean comfort to a man of God that he feels that, by divine arrangement and sacred predestination his times are in the hand of God.

But David's times were in God's hand in another sense, namely, that he had by faith committed them all to God. Observe carefully the fifth verse, "Into Your hand I commit my spirit: You have redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." In life we use the words which our Lord so patiently used in death; we hand over our spirits to the hands of God. If our lives were not appointed of heaven, we should wish they were. If there were no overruling Providence, we would crave for one. We would merge our own wills in the will of the great God, and cry, "Not as we will, but as You will." It would be a hideous thought to us if any one point of our life story were left to chance, or to the frivolities of our own fancy, But with joyful hope we fall back upon the eternal foresight and the infallible wisdom of God, and cry, "You shall choose our inheritance for us." We would beg Him to take our times into His hand, even if they were not there.

Moreover, beloved brethren, our times are in the Lord's hands, because we are one with Christ Jesus. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones." Everything that concerns Christ touches the great Father's heart. He thinks more of Jesus than of all the world. Hence it follows that when we become one with Jesus, we become conspicuous objects of the Father's care. He takes us in hand for the sake of His dear Son. He that loves the Head loves all the members of the mystical body. We cannot conceive of the dear Redeemer as ever being out of the Father's mind; neither can any of us who are in Christ be away from the Father's active, loving care; our times are ever in His hand. All His eternal purposes work towards the glorifying of the Son, and quite as surely they work together for the good of those who are in His Son. The purposes which concern our Lord and ourselves are so intertwined as never to be separated.

To have our times in God's hand must mean not only that they are at God's disposal, but that they are arranged by the highest wisdom. God's hand never errs, and if our times are in His hand, those times are ordered rightly. We need not puzzle our brains to understand the dispensations of Providence; a much easier and wiser course is open to us, namely, to believe the hand of the Lord works all things for the best. Sit still, O child, at your great Father's feet, and let Him do as seems Him good! When you cannot comprehend Him, know that a babe cannot understand the wisdom of its father. Your Father comprehends all things, though you do not; let His wisdom be enough for you. Everything in the hand of God is where it may be left without anxiety, and it is where it will be carried through to a prosperous issue. Things prosper which are in His hand. "My times are in Your hand," is an assurance that none can disturb, or pervert, or poison. In that hand we rest as securely as rests a babe upon its mother's breast. Where could our interests be so well secured as in the eternal hand? What a blessing it is to see by the eye of faith all things that concern you grasped in the hand of God! What peace as to every matter which could cause anxiety flows into the soul when we see all our hopes built upon so stable a foundation, and preserved by such supreme power! "My times are in your hand!"

Before I go into this subject, to show the sweetness of this confidence, I pray every Christian here to read the text, and take it in the singular, and not as we sang it just now—

*“Our times are in Your hand,
Whatever they may be,
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee.”*

We find it in the Psalm, “*My times are in Your hand.*” This does not exclude the whole body of the saints enjoying this safety together, but, after all, truth is sweetest when each man tastes the flavor of it for himself. Come, let each man take to himself this doctrine of the supreme appointment of God, and believe that it stands true as to his own case, “*My times are in Your hand.*” The wings of the cherubim cover *me*. The Lord Jesus loved me, and gave Himself for me, and my times are in those hands which were nailed to the cross for my redemption. What will be the effect of such a faith, if it is clear, personal, and enduring? This shall be our subject at this season. May the Holy Spirit help us!

I. A clear conviction that our times are in the hand of God WILL CREATE WITHIN US A SENSE OF THE NEARNESS OF GOD. If the hand of God is laid upon all our surroundings, God Himself is near us. Our Puritan fathers walked with God the more readily because they believed in God as arranging everything in their daily business and domestic life, and they saw Him in the history of the nation, and in all the events which transpired. The tendency of this age is to get further and further from God. Men will scarcely tolerate a Creator now, but everything must be evolved. To get God one stage further back is the ambition of modern philosophy, whereas, if we were wise, we should labor to clear out all obstacles, and leave a clear channel for drawing near to God, and for God to draw near to us. When we see that in His hand are all our ways, we feel that God is real and near.

“*My times are in Your hand.*” Then there is nothing left to chance. Events happen not to man by a fortune which has no order or purpose in it. “The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.” Chance is a heathenish idea which the teaching of the Word has cast down, even as the ark threw down Dagon, and broke him in pieces. Blessed is that man who has done with chance, who never speaks of luck, but believes that from the least even to the greatest, all things are ordained of the Lord. We dare not leave out the least event. The creeping of an aphid upon a rosebud is as surely arranged by the decree of Providence, as the march of a pestilence through a nation. Believe this, for if the least is omitted from the supreme government, so may the next be, and the next, till nothing is left in the divine hand. There is no place for chance, since God fills all things.

“*My times are in Your hand*” is an assurance which also puts an end to the grim idea of an iron fate compelling all things. Have you the notion that fate grinds on like an enormous wheel, ruthlessly crushing everything that lies in its way, not pausing for pity, nor turning aside for mercy? Remember that, if you liken Providence to a wheel, it must be a wheel which is full of eyes. Its every revolution is in wisdom and goodness. God’s eye leaves nothing in providence blind, but fills all things with sight. God works all things according to His purpose, but then *He* Himself works them. There is all the difference between the lone machinery of fixed fate, and the presence of a gracious, loving Spirit ruling all things. Things happen as He plans them, but He Himself is there to make them happen, and to moderate, and guide, and secure results. Our great joy is not, “*My times are in the wheel of destiny,*” but, “*My times are in Your hand.*” With a living, loving God to superintend all things, we feel ourselves at home, resting near our Father’s heart.

“*My times are in Your hand.*” Does not this reveal the condescension of the Lord? He has all heaven to worship Him, and all worlds to govern, and yet, “*my times*”—the times of such an inconsiderable and unworthy person as I am—are in His hand. Now, what is man that it should be so? Wonder of wonders, that God should not only think of me, but should make my concerns His concerns, and take my matters into His hand! He has the stars in His hand, and yet He puts *us* there. He deigns to take in hand the passing interests of obscure men and lowly women.

Beloved, God is near His people with all His attributes; His wisdom, His power, His faithfulness, His immutability, and these are under oath to work for the good of those who put their trust in Him. “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.” Yes, God considers our times, and thinks them over; with His heart and soul planning to do us good. That august mind, out of which all things spring, bows itself to us; and those eternal wings, which

cover the universe, also brood over us and our household, and our daily wants and woes. Our God sits not still as a listless spectator of our griefs, suffering us to be drifted like waifs upon the waters of circumstance, but is busily occupying Himself at all times for the defense and perfecting of His children. He leads us that He may bring us home to the place where His flock shall rest forever.

What a bliss this is! Our times, in all their needs and aspects, are in God's hand, and therefore God is always caring for us. How near it brings God to us, and us to God! Child of God, go not tomorrow into the field, lamenting that God is not there! He will bless your going out. Come not home to your chamber, crying, "Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!" He will bless your coming in. Go not to your bed, dreaming that you are left an orphan; neither wake up in the morning with a sense of loneliness upon you; you are not alone, for the Father is with you.

Will you not feel how good it is that God should come so close to you, and handle your bread and your water, and bless your bed and your board? Are you not happy to be allowed to come so close to God, as to say, "My times are in Your hand"? There is a great deal in this first point as to the nearness of the Lord, and if you will turn it over, you will see more and more that a conviction that our times are in God's hand tends to create a happy and holy sense of the nearness of God to us.

II. THIS TRUTH IS A COMPLETE ANSWER TO MANY A TEMPTATION. You know how craftily Satan will urge a temptation. He says, "Now you have a large family, and your chief duty is to provide for them. Your position brings with it many needs. Here is a plan of making money, others follow it. It may not be quite straight, but you must not be particular in such a world as this, for nobody else is." How will you meet this? If you can say to Satan, "It is not my business to provide for myself or for my family; my times are in God's hand, and His name is Jehovah-Jireh, 'the Lord will provide'; and I will not do a questionable thing, though it would fill my house with silver and gold from the cellar to the chimney pot. I shall not meddle with my Lord's business. It is His to provide for me; it is mine to walk uprightly, and obey His Word." This is a noble answer to the arch-enemy, but supposing he says, "Well, but you are already in difficulties and you cannot extricate yourself if you are too precise. A poor man cannot afford to have a conscience; it is an expensive luxury in these days. Give your conscience a holiday and you can soon get out of your trouble." Let your reply be, "O prince of darkness, it is no business of mine to extricate myself! My times are in God's hand. I have taken my case to Him, and He will work for me in this matter better than I can do for myself! He does not wish me to do a wrong thing that I may do for myself what He has promised to do for me." We are not called upon to eke out God's wisdom with a bit of our own wickedness. God forbid! Do the right, even if the heavens should fall. The Lord who has taken your business into His hand will bear you through.

"Well," says one, "we may use a little discreet policy in religious matters, and keep the peace by wise compromise. We may accomplish our end all the sooner by going a little roundabout. If you can just let truth wait for a little until the fine weather comes, and the silver slippers are in season, then she will be saved a good deal of annoyance!" Brethren, it is not for us to pick and plan times in this fashion. God's cause is in God's hand, and God would not have us help His cause by a compromising hand being laid on His ark. Remember what the hand of Uzzah brought on him, though he meant well. Let us continue steadfast in the integrity of our walk, and we shall find our times are in God's hand, and that they are well ordered, and need no hasty and unholy interposition on our part.

Brethren, is it not a delightful thing for us to know that though we are on a stormy voyage, the Lord Himself is at the helm? The course we do not know, nor even our present latitude and longitude, but the Pilot knows all about us and about the sea also. It will be our wisdom not to interfere with our Captain's orders. They put up a notice on the steamboats, "Do not speak to the man at the wheel." We are very apt, in our unbelief, to dispute with Him to whom the steering of our vessel is entrusted. We shall not confuse Him, thank God, but we often confound and confuse ourselves by our idle complaining against the living Lord. No, when you are tempted to presume, or to act in a despairing haste, or to hide your principles, or to do something which is not defensible, in order that you may arrange your times more comfortably, answer with a decided "No," and say, "My times are in God's hand," and there I will leave them."

When the devil comes with His subtle questions and insinuations, refer Him to your Lord, in whose hand your times are placed. When you have a lawsuit, the opposite side will like come and talk with you, to see if they can get something out of you. It will be your wisdom to reply, "If you have anything

to say, say it to my solicitor." If the devil comes to you, and you get into an argument with him, he will beat you, for he is a very ancient lawyer, and he has been at the business for so many ages that you cannot match him. Send him to your Advocate. Refer him to the Wonderful, the Counselor. Ever shelter beneath this fact, "My times are in His hand. I have left the whole business to another, and I cannot dis-honor Him by intermeddling." Satan knows the Christ too well to go to Him; he knows the taste of His broadsword, of "It is written." He will not contest with Jesus, if we leave Him to plead the causes of our soul.

III. In the third place, THIS CONVICTION IS A SUFFICIENT SUPPORT AGAINST THE FEAR OF MEN. We may say to ourselves, when our enemies bear very hard upon us, "I am not in their hands. My times are in Your hand." Here are gentlemen judging and condemning us with great rapidity. They say, "He has made a great mistake; he is an old bigot; he has snuffed himself out." This is easier said than done. The candle shines still. They say of you, "He is foolish and headstrong, and on religious matters he is as obstinate as a mule, and he will come to grief." You have not come to grief, yet, in the way they predict, and they had better not prophesy till they know. The godly are not in the hands of those who mock them. The wicked may gnash their teeth at believers, but they cannot destroy them. Here is their comfort, they have committed their spirit to the hand of God, and He will sacredly preserve the precious deposit. Fear not the judgments of men. Appeal to a higher court. Take the case to the King's Bench. Go to God Himself with the matter, and He will bring forth your judgment as the light, and your righteousness as the noonday.

Do the malicious resolve to crush you? They will use to the utmost their little power, but there is a higher power which will hold them in. Rejoicingly say, "My times are in Your hand." Do they treat you with contempt? Do they sneer at you? What does that matter? Your honor comes not from men. Their contempt is the highest compliment the wicked can pay you.

Alas, many professors place their times in the hands of the world! If they prosper and grow rich, they see an opportunity of social advantage, and they quit their humbler friends to join a more respectable sect. How many are lost to fidelity because their prosperous times are not in God's hand, but in their own! Some, on the other hand, when they are in adversity, get away from the Lord. The excuse is, "I cannot go to the house of God any more, for my clothes are not as respectable as they used to be." Is your poverty to take you out of your Lord's hands? Never let it be so, but say, "My times are in Your hand." Cleave to the Lord in losses as well as in gains, and so let all your times be with Him.

How often we meet with people who are staggered by slander! It is impossible to stop malicious tongues. They wound, and even slay, the characters of the godly. The tried one cries, "I cannot bear it; I shall give all up." Why? Why yield to mere talk? Even these cruel tongues are in God's hand. Can you not brave their attacks? They cannot utter a single whisper more than God permits. Go on your way, O righteous man, and let false tongues pour forth their poison as they will. "Every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment you shall condemn." If my times are in God's hand, no man can do me harm unless God permit. Though my soul is among lions, yet no lion can bite me while Jehovah's angel is my guard.

This feeling, that our interests are safe in the highest keeping, breeds an independent spirit. It prevents our cringing before the great, and flattering the strong. At the same time, it removes all tendency to envy, so that you do not wish for the prosperity of the wicked, nor fret yourself because of evildoers. When one knows that his times are in God's hand, he would not change places with a king; no, nor with an angel.

IV. A full belief in the statement of our text is A CURE FOR PRESENT WORRY. O Lord, if my times are in Your hand, I have cast my care on You, and I trust and am not afraid! Why is it, my sister—for this habit of worrying abounds among the gracious sisterhood—why do you vex yourself about a matter which is in the hand of God? If He has undertaken for you, what cause have you for anxiety? And you, my brother—for there are plenty of men who are nervous and fretful—why do you want to interfere with the Lord's business? If the case is in His hand, what need can there be for you to be prying and crying? You were worrying this morning, and fretting last night and you are distressed now, and will be worse tomorrow morning. May I ask you a question? Did you ever get any good by fretting? When there was not rain enough for your farm, did you ever fret a shower down? When there was too much wet, or you thought so, did you ever worry the clouds away? Tell me, did you ever make a sixpence by worry-

ing? It is a very unprofitable business. Do you answer, "What, then, are we to do in troublous times?" Why, go to Him into whose hand you have committed yourself and your times. Consult with infinite wisdom by prayer; console yourself with infinite love by fellowship with God. Tell the Lord what you feel, and what you fear. Ten minutes' praying is better than a year's murmuring. He that waits upon God, and casts his burden upon Him, may lead a royal life; indeed, he will be far happier than a king.

To leave our times with God is to live as free from care as the birds upon the bough. If we fret, we shall not glorify God, and we shall not constrain others to see what true religion can do for us in the hour of tribulation. Fret and worry put it out of our power to act wisely, but if we can leave everything with God because everything is really in His hand, we shall be peaceful, and our action will be deliberate; and for that very reason it will be more likely to be wise. He that rolls his burden upon the Lord will be strong to do or to suffer, and his days shall be as the days of heaven upon the earth. I admire the serenity of Abraham. He never seems to be in a fluster, but he moves grandly, like a prince among men. He is much more than the equal of the greatest man he meets; we can hardly see Lot with a microscope when we have once seen Abraham. Why was that? Because he believed in God, and staggered not.

Half the joy of life lies in expectation. Our children get greater pleasure out of expecting a holiday than they do out of the day itself. It is much the same with ourselves. If we believe that all our times are in God's hand, we shall be expecting great things from our heavenly Father. When we get into a difficulty we shall say, "I am now going to see the wonders of God, and to learn again how surely He delivers them that trust in Him." I thank God I have learned at times to glory in necessities, as opening a window into heaven for me, out of which the Lord would abundantly pour forth His supplies. It has been to me so unspeakable a delight to see how the Lord has supplied my needs for the Orphanage, the College, and other works, that I have half wished to be in straits, that I might see how the Lord would appear for me. I remember, some time ago, when year after year all the money came in for the various enterprises, I began to look back with regret upon those grand days when the Lord permitted the brook Cherith to dry up, and called off the ravens with their bread and meat, and then found some other way of supplying the orphans' needs. In those days, the Lord used to come to me, as it were, walking on the tops of the mountains, stepping from peak to peak, and by marvelous deeds supplying all my needs, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Do you know, I almost wished that the Lord would stop the streams, and then let me see how He can fetch water out of the rock. He did so, not very long ago. Funds ran very low, and then I cried to Him, and He heard me out of His holy hill. How glad was I to hear the footsteps of the ever-present Lord, answering to His child's prayer, and letting him know that his times were still in his Father's hand! Surely it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is a joy worth worlds to be driven where none but the Lord can help you, and then to see His mighty hand pulling you out of the net. The joy lies mainly in the fact that you are sure it is the Lord, and sure that He is near you. This blessed realization of the Lord's interposition causes us to glory in tribulation. Is not that a cure for worry, a blessed cure for anxiety?

V. Fifthly, a firm conviction of this truth is A QUIETUS AS TO FUTURE DREAD. "My times are in Your hand." Do you wish to know what is going to happen to you in a short time? Would you look between the folded leaves of the future? You can buy a penny newspaper which will tell you the fate of nations this very year. You may be well-near sure that nothing will happen which is thus predicted, and thus it may be of some little use to you. Be content with the prophecies of Scripture, but follow not every interpreter of them. Many people would pay largely to have the future made known to them. If they were wise, they would rather desire to have it concealed. Do not want to know; such knowledge would answer no useful purpose. The future is intended to be a sealed book. The present is all we need to have before us. Do your day's work in its day, and leave tomorrow with your God. If there were ways of reading the future, it would be wise to decline to use them. The knowledge would create responsibility, arouse fear, and diminish present enjoyment; why seek after it? Famish idle curiosity, and give your strength to believing obedience. Of this you may be quite sure, that there is nothing in the book of the future which should cause distrust to a believer. Your times are in God's hand, and this secures them.

The very word "times" supposes change for you, but as there are no changes with God, all is well. Things will happen which you cannot foresee, but your Lord has foreseen all, and provided for all. Nothing can occur without His divine allowance, and He will not permit that which would be for your real or permanent injury. "I should like to know," says one, "whether I shall die soon." Have no desire in that

direction; your time will come when it should. The best way to live above all fear of death is to die every morning before you leave your bedroom. The apostle Paul said, "I die daily." When you have got into the holy habit of daily dying, it will come easy to you to die for the last time. It is greatly wise to be familiar with our last hours. As you take off your garments at night, rehearse the solemn scene when you shall lay aside your robe of flesh. When you put on your garments in the morning, anticipate the being clothed upon with your house which is from heaven in the day of resurrection. To be fearful of death is often the height of folly. A great prophet once ran away many miles to escape from death by an imperious queen. He was one of the bravest of the brave, and yet He hurried into solitude to escape a woman's threat. When he had finished his weary walk, he sat down, and actually prayed, "Let me die." It was a singular thing to do, to run for his life, and then to cry, "Let me die." That man never did die, for we speak of Elijah, who rode to heaven in a chariot of fire. God does not answer all His people's prayers, for He has better things for them than they ask. Do not tremble about what may never happen. Even we may never die, for it is written, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." Some of us may be alive and remain at the coming of the Lord. Who knows? Behold, He comes quickly. At any rate, do not let us worry about death, for it is in His hands.

VI. Again, a full conviction that our times are in His hand will be A REASON FOR CONSECRATED SERVICE. If God has undertaken my business for me, then I may most fitly undertake such business for Him as He may appoint. Queen Elizabeth wished one of the leading merchants of London to go to Holland to watch her interests there. The honest man told Her Majesty that he would obey her commands, but he begged her to remember that it would involve the ruin of his own trade for him to be absent. To this the Queen replied, "If you will see to my business, I will see to your business." With such a royal promise he might willingly let his own business go, for a queen should have it in her power to do more for a subject than he can do for himself. The Lord, in effect, says to the believer, "I will take your affairs in hand, and see them through for you." Will you not at once feel that now it is your joy, your delight, to live to glorify your gracious Lord? To be set free to serve the Lord is the highest freedom. How beautiful it is to read in the book of Isaiah, "And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers"! Outsiders shall do the drudgery for you, and set you free for higher service. Read on and see, "But you shall be named the Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the Ministers of our God." Faith sets us free from the wear and tear of carking care, that we may give ourselves up wholly to the service of the Lord our God. Faith causes us to live exempt from fret, to serve the blessed God alone. Set free from the burden of earthly things by God's kind care of us, we present our bodies as living sacrifices unto the Lord our God. He has not made us slaves and drudges, but priests and kings unto God.

I am sure, dear friends, if we get this truth fully saturating our souls that our times are in God's hand, it will make life a grander thing than it has ever seemed to be. Do you believe that God's hand is working with you and for you? Then are you lifted above the dumb-driven cattle that surround you, for the God of heaven thinks upon you, and puts His hand to your affairs. This connection with the divine puts heart into a man, and rises him to high endeavor, and great belief. We feel we are immortal till our work is done; we feel that God is with us, and that we are bound to be victorious through the blood of Jesus. We shall not be defeated in the campaign of life, for the Lord of hosts is with us, and we shall tread down our enemies. God will strengthen us, for our times are in His hand, therefore we will serve Him with all our heart, and with all our soul, being fully convinced that "our labor is not in vain in the Lord."

VII. Lastly, if our times are in God's hand, here is A GRAND ARGUMENT FOR FUTURE BLESSEDNESS. He that takes care of our times will take care of our eternity. He that has brought us so far, and worked so graciously for us, will see us safely over the rest of the road. I marvel at some of you older folks, when you begin to doubt. You will say, "Look at yourself." Well, so I do, and I am heartily ashamed that ever a grain of mistrust should get into the eye of my faith. I would weep it out, and keep it out for the future. Still, some of you are older than I am, for you are seventy or eighty years of age. How much longer do you expect to travel in this wilderness? Have you another ten years, do you think? God has been gracious to you for seventy years, and will you fret about the last ten, which, indeed, may never come? That will never do. God has delivered some of you out of such great trials that your present ones are mere fleabites. Sir Francis Drake, after he had sailed around the world, came up the Thames, and

when he had passed Gravesend, there came a storm which threatened the ship. The brave commander said, "What! Go around the world safely, and then get drowned in a ditch? Never!" So we ought to say. God has upheld us in great tribulations, and we are not going to be cast down about trials which are common to men. A man of energy, if he takes a work in hand, will push it through, and the Lord our God never undertakes what he will not complete. "My times are in Your hand," and therefore the end will be glorious. My Lord, if my times were in my own hand, they would prove a failure, but since they are in Your hand, You will not fail, nor shall I. The hand of God ensures success all along the line. In that day when we shall see the tapestry which records our lives, we shall see all the scenes therein with wondering eyes; we shall see what wisdom, what love, what tenderness, what care was lavished upon them. When once a matter is in God's hand it is never neglected or forgotten, but it is carried out to the end. Therefore, comfort one another with these words.

I have not been able to preach on this text as I hoped to do, for I am full of pain, and have a heavy headache, but, thank God, I have no heartache, with such a glorious truth before me. Sweet to my soul are these words—"My times are in Your hand." Take the golden sentence home with you. Keep this truth in your mind. Let it lie on your tongue like a wafer made with honey. Let it dissolve until your whole nature is sweetened by it. Yes, dear old lady, you that have come out of the workhouse this morning to hear this sermon, say to yourself, "My times are in Your hand." Yes, you, dear friend, who cannot find employment, and have been walking your shoes off your feet in the vain endeavor to seek one; you also may say, "My times are in Your hand." Yes, my dear sister, pining away with consumption, this may be your song, "My times are in Your hand." Yes, young man, you that have just started in business, and have met with a crushing loss, it will be for your benefit after all; therefore say, "My times are in Your hand." This little sentence, to my mind, swells into a hymn; it buds and blossoms into a psalm. Few are the words, but mighty is the sense, and full of rest.

Now, remember, it is not everybody that can find honey in this hive. O sinners, you are in the hands of an angry God, and this is terrible! The God against whom you continually sin, and whom you provoke by refusing His grace, has absolute power over you. Beware, you that forget God, lest He tear you in pieces. You have provoked, offended, and grieved Him, but yet there is hope, for His mercy endures forever. Though you have vexed His Holy Spirit, yet return unto Him, and He will have mercy upon you, and abundantly pardon you. It is certain that you are in His hands, and that you cannot escape from Him. If you should climb to heaven, or dive to hell, you would not, be out of His reach. No strength of yours can resist Him, no speed can outrun Him. Yield yourselves to God, and then this great power of God, which now surrounds you, shall become your comfort. At present it ought to be your terror. The eyes of God are fixed upon you; the hand of God is against you, and if you are unsaved, one touch of that hand will mean death and everlasting destruction. That hand, which the believer devoutly kisses, is the hand which you may well dread. Oh, that you would flee to Christ Jesus, and find shelter from wrath beneath the crimson canopy of His precious blood! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 31.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—910, 701, 703.

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